

FREE WITH ANY PURCHASE

Club Microbyte



REVIEWED THIS ISSUE - TURBO OUTRUN - SWITCHBLADE - CHASE HQ + MANY MORE!



CHASE
H.Q.

GAME
OF THE
MONTH

THE FASTEST, MOST THRILLING, 3D DRIVING GAME YET!

Take the wheel of your turbo-charged Porsche as you and your partner go in pursuit of dangerous criminals all driving an evil array of souped-up roadsters.

TURBO BOOST!

Need to catch up in a hurry? Well, just one press of your Turbo Button will leave your eyes in the back of your head!

BARRELLING THROUGH THE CITY STREETS,

along the roughest of dirt tracks and through busy tunnels – if you can hold the line! The low life can run, but they can't hide... **CHASE H.Q.**



AMSTRAD COMMODORE	SPECTRUM SPECTRUM	ATARI ST ATARI ST	AMIGA AMIGA
£9.99	£9.99	£19.99	£24.99



V O T E D ARCADE GAME OF THE YEAR



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BOOTBLOCK

'Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingle all the way!' Christmas. I luv it!! Trudging into work through all that snow, getting coated in brown slush as a bus whizzes by, you can't beat it can you! (HUMBUG!!).

Seriously though, the festive season is once more upon us. Christmas is a time for giving and receiving, and hopefully, this mag will give you a good idea of what you want to receive! (and give if you're feeling generous!)

Apologies for the delay in getting issue two on the streets. Unfortunately, I was 'called' to other duties for a short time, which really fouled things up magazine-wise, it was unavoidable however but I do apologise for any distress! (I seem to have gone a bit over the top with exclamation marks this time!!).

Apologies to US Gold for bijou little error in the October issue. The ratings for the C64 Strider were actually for the Amstrad version, but you all new that anyway didn't you! I also reported about a new compilation called Light Force (16 bit) and Dark Force (8 bit) from Ocean. Unfortunately, Ocean encountered a few little probs when they came to include Batman: The Caped Crusader, so the 16 bit versions will now contain Bio Challenge instead. As for the 8 bit versions, the titles have been used to form a whole new bunch of fabbo compilations!

Apologies for the lack of a PC Show report. Most of the things on show were Christmas releases, so the more interesting ones are included in this issue. Any other stuff will be covered in the Previews section. Okey dokey!

Right then, what little goodies have we got in Santa's sack this time. Well children lets have a look shall we.

The Bitmap's speak out! An 'in depth' (as they say in "the biz") interview that has survived from the last issue. Indiana Jones: The Graphic Adventure was also to have been included in the 'phantom' issue, but as it is such an enjoyable game, I decided to include it in this issue. Gremlin are back on form with two absolutely fabbo 16 bit releases, Switchblade and Axel's Magic Hammer.

US Gold have a few goodies in here this month too, namely TURBO OUTRUN and GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS, both cracking titles.

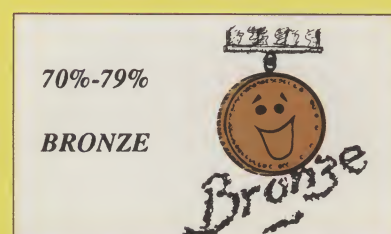
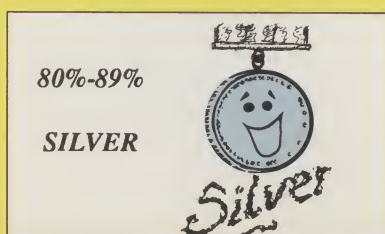
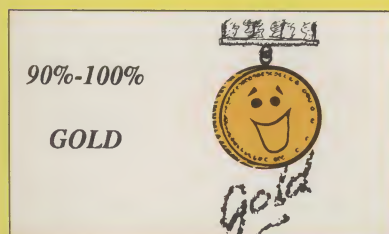
Talking of Turbo Outrun, did you know that there are a tremendous amount of driving games due out this Xmas? In no specific order, there's TURBO OUTRUN (US Gold), CHASE HQ (Ocean), HARD DRIVIN' (Domark), POWER DRIFT (Activision), STUNT CAR RACER (Microprose), DRIVIN' FORCE (Digital Magic Software) plus god knows how many others! You pays your money and takes your choice as they say!

Right then, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. See you in 1990!

BYE !

DEAN

THE MEDALS TABLE



This magazine is designed to help you select the best software. Any software we review that we feel does not rate higher than 70% will not be featured in the magazine. HOWEVER! Just because a game is not featured in the magazine, it does NOT mean it is a bad game. The opinions expressed in this magazine are our personal views and if you are unsure of what software to buy, your local Computer Retailer will only be too happy to advise you.

***Pretty As A Picture,
Mean As The Devil.***

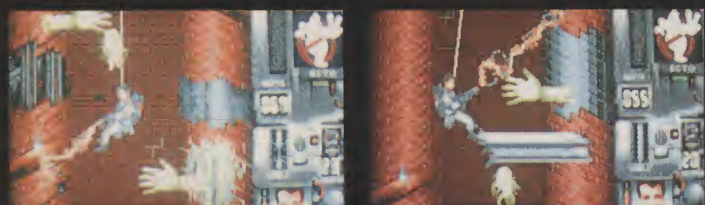
THEY'

**Weird things happen...
The slime is on the rise.
The Titanic has arrived.
And after 300 years, Vigo
the Carpathian won't
stay dead.**

Who you gonna call?

**Get your bustin' business
back on its feet. Hit the
streets in your
Ectomobile. Go
underground to discover
a river of slime...and rise
above it all with the
Statue of Liberty. All to
turn evil to good and
defeat Vigo at the
Museum of Art.**

**Action, adventure,
strategy challenges —
and great laughs.
Ghostbusters II.**



ATARI ST SCREEN SHOWN



GHSTBUSTERS™ II

'RE BACK!



 **ACTIVISION**

ONSLAUGHT

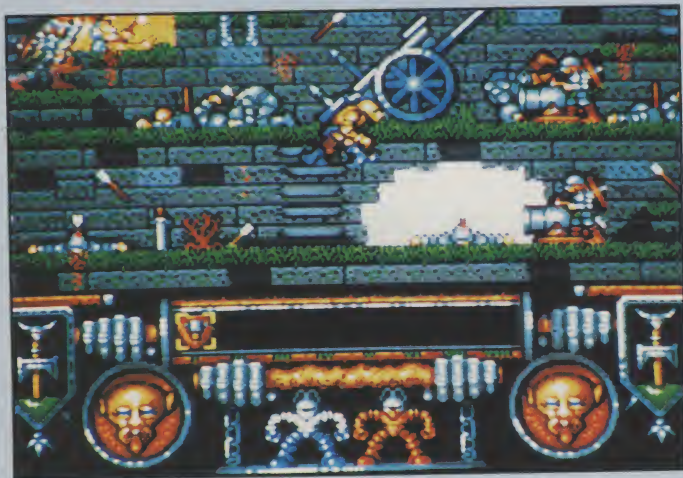
HEWSON - ST AND AMIGA - £24.99 - AVAILABLE SOON

The land of Gargore is not a peaceful place, there's always a war going on somewhere! Armies battle continually in their endless battle to gain more land. However mighty the army, all of them fear a 'Fanatic', solitary warriors whose whole lives are one big battle, they live to fight and fight to live. You are that warrior, a warrior with a strength of an army, whose goal is to destroy all who stand before him.

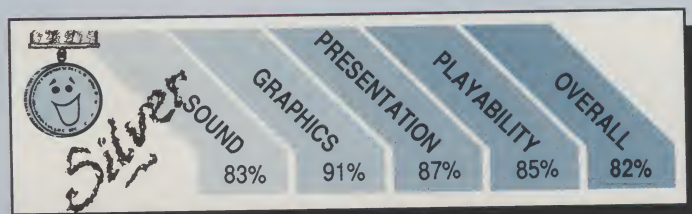
The game is divided into four sections, Field Battles, Sieges, Defending Actions and Mind Combat. You begin by selecting the area you wish to attack on the campaign map.

Field Battles are fought on the battle map. Starting from your own camp, you must work your way to the enemy encampment at the right hand side of the battle map, and capture the opposition's flag. As you progress across the terrain, enemy troops attack from the right, making their way to your camp at the opposite end of the battle map. The more troops you let get past you, the greater the risk of your flag being captured. Capturing the enemy flag results in no more enemy soldiers arriving from the right of the screen.

Once you have arrived at the enemy camp, you must attempt to siege the castle. When you have defeated all of the troops in the castle, you must finally face the General in a Mind Duel.



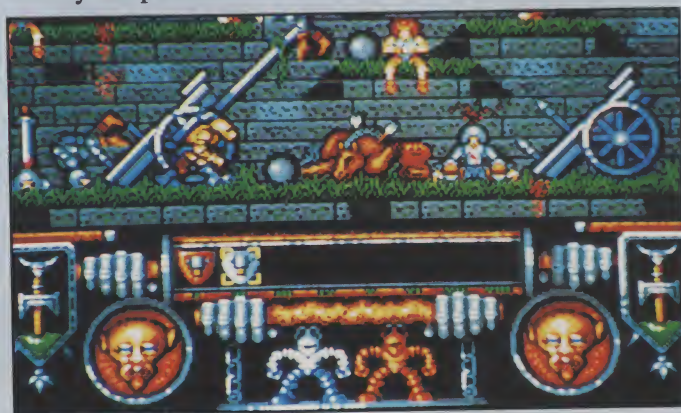
ATARI ST/AMIGA



A Mind Duel takes place on a single screen, with the General represented by a central face with large arms extending from the centre. The warrior is represented by his/her banner, which can be used to fire mind blasts at the General, with each successive hit shortening the length of the arms, and finally destroying the General. Mind Duels may also take place when a special campaign map location is entered.

Defending Actions are similar in style to Field Battles, however, as oppose to trying to capture the enemy's flag, you are defending your own flag, failure to do so results in a Mind Duel with the attacking General.

The attacking forces come in all shapes and sizes, including Spearmen, Wizards, Cavalry, even flying carpets! Luckily you have a wide variety of weapons at your disposal including a magic mace, crossbow and explosive heavy bombs, plus a wide variety of spells.



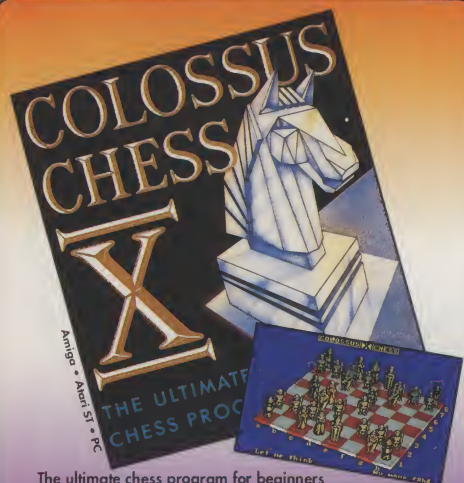
COMMENTS

The first thing you notice about ONSLAUGHT is the remarkable graphics, both backgrounds and sprites are beautifully coloured and drawn with some excellent animation. Plenty of colour has been used throughout, in fact it's hard to believe that there are only 16 colours! The sound on both versions is excellent, with loads of sampled effects and some nice tunes by the Maniacs of Noise. At first it just seems a case of 'choose an army to attack and get stuck in', however this is not the case, as careful scrutiny of the enemies info screen will tell you just how dangerous they are. ONSLAUGHT does seem a little difficult at first, there's so much going on. Once the initial confusion is overcome however, you will find you're left with a very challenging and addictive arcade game.

Classic Names



Classic Games



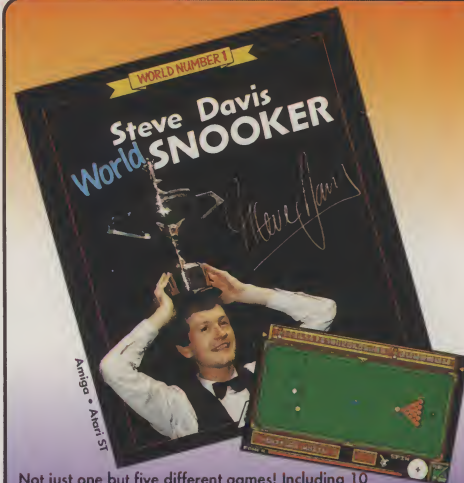
The ultimate chess program for beginners and experts alike! The first chess program ever to learn from playing experience! Infinite playing levels; Stunning 2D/3D graphics; Change game view by tilting and rotating board.

"What a debut! Brilliant!" **NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS**
"The definitive chess program!" **ST WORLD**



The most innovative role playing simulation yet, of the toughest job in sport! Take your team to the top against the best in Europe.

Highly graphic presentation, original and challenging gameplay, and in-depth tactical choices make this the ultimate soccer management simulation yet programmed!



Not just one but five different games! Including 10 or 15 ball Snooker, UK and US Pool, UK and Carom Billiards.

Choose your computer opponent from six skill levels; zoom in on the action for difficult shots; replay the last shot in slow motion.

All this plus much, much more.



Enjoy all the excitement and frustration of an actual day at the races!

Included is a full card of 10 races, the form of 180 horses, 12 jockeys and over 400 races.

Choose track conditions, handicap the races and place bets in this true to life action packed simulation.

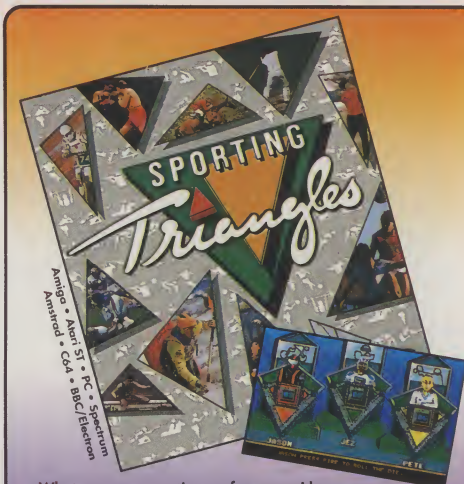


A unique combination of computer and board game gives you the chance to command an armoured division. Comes complete with quality pieces and board, comprehensive manual and a highly graphic animated program.

"An interesting, clever approach to the wargame concept with some well thought out game ideas, a lot of fun to play" **CRASH 80%**

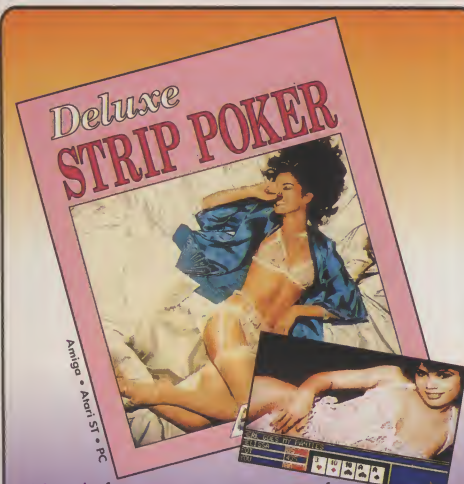
"CDS have managed to combine board and computer and produce a great game for everyone"

Overall 85% COMPUTER GAMESWEEK



Whatever your sporting preference, with over 2500 questions to choose from, this computer version of the top rated TV sports quiz show is bound to test, intrigue, puzzle and frustrate.

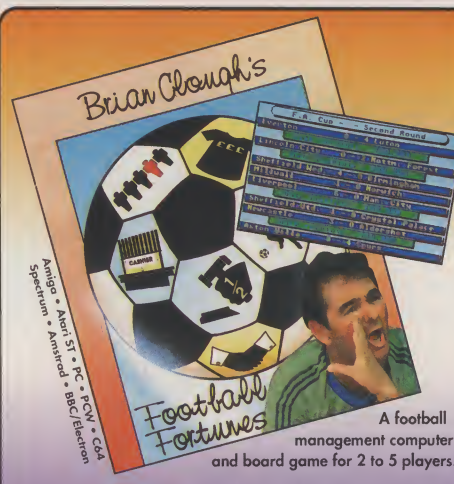
This game is produced under licence and by permission of Central Independent Television Plc.



Join each of your two gorgeous opponents for a game of Strip Poker! Each of these shapely ladies want to play!

Which one will you choose?

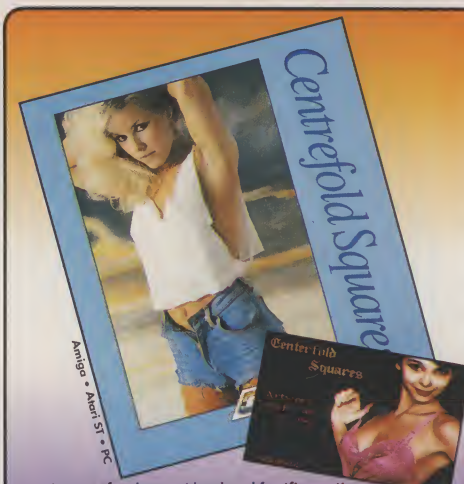
Who cares! The clothes will soon disappear as you 'roll' and win! Deluxe Strip Poker: real for the faint hearted!



A football management computer and board game for 2 to 5 players.

You must steer your team to League and Cup triumphs. Brian Clough's Football Fortunes combines an excellent range of computer based features with a fascinating high quality board game.

ZZAP! SIZZLER 93%
YOUR SINGLE MEGA GAME 9/10



A game for those with a head for 'figures'!

You are faced with a screen full of blank squares, but what delights lie hidden, just waiting for you.

Pit your wits against your chosen Centrefold in an attempt to win each of the squares.

REVIEWED ON
SPECTRUM
£9.99 CASSETTE
£14.99 DISK
AMIGA
£24.99 DISK

CHASE

Strap yourself in, this is gonna' be one hell of a ride! Chase HQ has arrived fresh from the arcades in what must be one of the classiest Spectrum products ever!

You are the top cop in the SCI (Special Criminal Investigation), and your job is to take on the criminals that nobody else wants to.

As you leap into your Turbo-charged Porsche 928, you hear a familiar voice on your in-car crime computer. Details of the perpetrators flash up on screen, along with details of the car they are driving. Don't expect to find them chugging along in a clapped old mini either, these guys have got taste and only go for the fastest sports cars!



GAM
OF THE
MON



Luckily, your car is equipped with a limited turbo which gives you that extra burst of speed just when you needed, which is extremely useful as you are also racing against the clock. You have a time limit of 60 seconds to sight the offending vehicle, and a further minute to bring him to a standstill. If you're expecting him to pull over when you flash your little blue light you had better think again, the only way to get this guy to stop is to ram him off the road!!

Your in-car computer is a clever piece of kit too! When you arrive at a fork in the road, it will indicate which direction the target vehicle is in, and upon sighting the vehicle, will indicate the number of hits required to bring the car to a halt.



H.Q.

ALSO AVAILABLE FOR (C/D)
COMMODORE 64 - £9.99/£14.99
AMSTRAD - £9.99/£14.99
ATARI ST - £19.99(DISK)

ME
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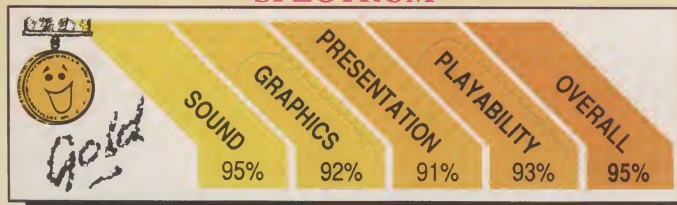


Points are awarded for progressively for passing cars, 200 pts, 400 pts and so on up to 8,000 pts per car passed, however, colliding with a civilian car will reset the points counter. Points are also awarded for colliding with the target car, plus a cumulative bonus is awarded for the completion of the level.

There are five missions in total, taking place over differing landscapes and towns, beware, some shortcuts are a bit of a rough ride!!



SPECTRUM



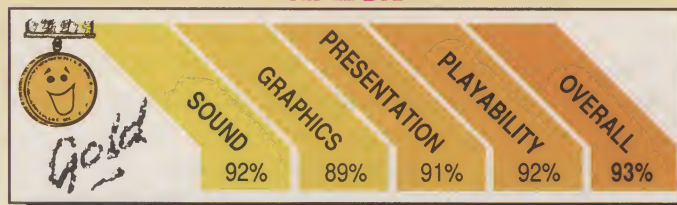
COMMENTS

With a screech of tyres and a smell of rubber, CHASE HQ is here!! It's pretty obvious that Ocean have had a few late nights with this one, the attention to detail is second to none!

Graphics on both versions are excellent, with some nicely detailed sprites and some very fast moving road graphics, which gives an exhilarating feeling of speed. The Amiga is well known for it's sound capabilities and Ocean have taken full advantage with some gorgeous tunes and loads of samples and speech straight from the arcade machine. However, what you don't expect is a similar sort of performance from the Spectrum (128). No kidding, the music is out of this world with some sampled drums and quite a bit of the arcade speech in there as well!!

CHASE HQ has to be one of the finest conversions yet seen on any home computer, keep an eye out for the ST, C64 and Amstrad versions, if these two are anything to go by, they are going to be brilliant!

AMIGA



INDIANA JONES

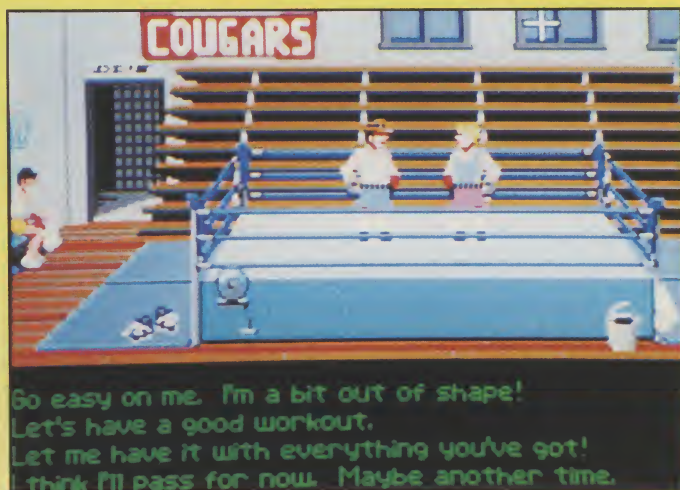
ST - PC - AMIGA
LUCASFILM/
US GOLD

AND THE LAST CRUSADE THE GRAPHIC ADVENTURE

AMIGA - £24.99
ST - £24.99
PC - £29.99

The man in the hat is back yet again, this time courtesy of Lucasfilm, in **INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE: THE GRAPHIC ADVENTURE**. Just in case you haven't seen the film or read the book, I'll fill you in on the story.

Dr. Henry Jones, Indy's father, has mysteriously disappeared while searching for the Holy Grail, which apparently was the cup Christ quaffed from during the Last Supper. Unknown to Indy, his father is now being held by the Nazi's who are trying to use him to locate the Grail so Hitler can drink from the cup and so gain eternal youth. Indy's father has other plans however, and before he is captured, sends his Grail Diary, his lifetimes work, to Indy at the college in a bid to save the whereabouts of the Grail from the Nazi's. Got all that? Good!



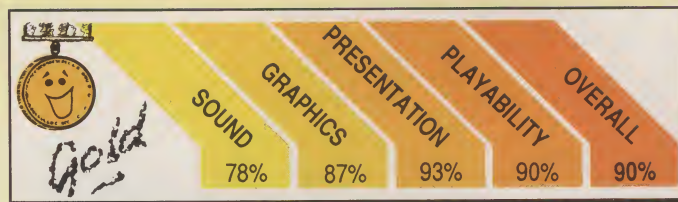
This is the bit where you come in! You play the part of Indy who's quest is to find the Grail and rescue your father. You begin your quest in the gym at the college where you can practice your boxing (useful for those scraps with the Nazi's!), and try out the various commands at your disposal. The bottom third of the screen is taken up by a number of text commands which can be linked together or used in conjunction with the on screen objects to link together some quite complex commands. The rest of the screen is taken up by the action window, which plays out all the actions you have set. Control is by mouse, joystick or keyboard, although no text input is required.

The game can be played along the lines of the film, or different routes can be taken, so it isn't necessary to have seen the film beforehand. You will find yourself in the sewers of Venice, in a Nazi castle and up against the might of the Luftwaffe!



COMMENTS

Its a long time since I have played a game of such depth, variety and complexity. The whole game simply oozes atmosphere. The graphics are very well drawn with some excellent backdrops and beautifully animated sprites, Indy's whole world is just so believable! The sound can become a little grating at times, but it can be turned off if required. Although the game closely follows the film, don't think you're going to fly through it just because you've seen the film. You can follow the same route as the film if you so wish, but there are many other paths you can take. The game comes on a colossal 6 disks and comes complete with a thick Grail Diary, which gives accounts of all the supposed sightings of the Grail throughout the ages. Your first quest in the game is to find the Grail Diary which your father sent to you to avoid it falling into the wrong hands. By using the clues in the game diary, and the diary in the box you will be lead deeper into the game. An altogether brilliant game that comes highly recommended to arcade fans and adventure buffs alike.



AXEL'S MAGIC HAMMER

GREMLIN - ST/AMIGA REVIEWED - £19.99

AXEL'S FOLLY

After a relatively quiet period, Gremlin have returned into the fray this month with two excellent 16 bit releases. Switchblade (reviewed elsewhere) is one, the other is AXEL'S MAGIC HAMMER.

Your girlfriend, Lucy, has been captured and is being held in a castle which is being guarded by a rather large dragon. It is your quest, as Axel, to rescue Lucy and so save her from a fate worse than death.



Unluckily, standing between you and your beloved are eight torturous levels, filled to the brim with vicious nasties, all intent on your doom. Luckily, Axel is armed with his magic hammer which at first is just your basic brick and monster bashing variety, however, with each subsequent power-up collected, the power of the hammer can be increased to one mighty weapon!

Each level consists of 25 screens, many of which are cunningly hidden and may also contain many bonus tokens, power-ups and coins. Along your travels you will encounter many blocks, which can be bashed with your magic hammer to reveal power-ups bonuses, energy, gold and silver coins, extra lives, invulnerability, keys, bombs, hourglass (extra time), even a helmet, which can be used to headbutt the bricks!

Beginning your quest in the Roman Village, you must work your way through the Cliff, the Ice Cave, Jungle, Egyptian Pyramid, Underground Factory, Cave and Woods and finally, the Castle and it's dank dungeons! The exit to each level is guarded by a big, vicious nasty who will do all he can to stop you completing your quest. Can you save Lucy?



COMMENTS

A few years ago, the term 'platform game' and Gremlin went hand in hand, the excellent Monty games were (and still are!) some of the best platform games around.

The real excitement in Axel comes from the discovery factor, there are just loads of things to be found, mystery screens to discover, the whole thing is totally enjoyable! The gameplay is out of this world.

AXEL'S MAGIC HAMMER has taken all the playable platform action of the Monty games, a bit of Alex Kidd and Mario Bros. mixed them up and come out with an excellent platform/arcade adventure. The graphics are very well drawn, with some well animated sprites and loads of colour splashed throughout. A jolly little tune invites you into the game, although the sound is limited to FX during the game, which is not a criticism, because there are some brilliant sampled effects in there!



As I mentioned earlier, this is one of two superb Gremlin arcade/adventure games reviewed this month. If Auntie Mary's given you a flippin' great wodge of cash for Chrimbo you've got no worries, If she hasn't, 'you pays your money and takes your choice' as they say. Either way, you can't go wrong!

Gold	SCORE				
	SOUND	GRAPHICS	PRESENTATION	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL
	89%	89%	90%	93%	94%

TURBO

C64/AMIGA/ST REVIEWED - SPEC/AMS
ALSO AVAILABLE!

OUTRUN

US GOLD - AVAILABLE SOON!

The Ferrari F40 is one of the fastest 'supercars' available today, and for as little as £9.99, US Gold can give you the thrill (or as near as you're gonna get!) of driving one.

TURBO OUTRUN is US Gold's latest arcade conversion, and is the follow-up to the immensely successful Outrun, one of the biggest selling games of all time.

TURBO OUTRUN puts you in the seat of a Ferrari F40 in a high speed East Coast to West Coast race 'n' chase from New York to Los Angeles. It all started when some jerk in a Porsche 959 started mouthing off about him having the best motor. Not to be shown up in front of your chick, you decided to show him who's boss and challenged him to a duel.



COMMENTS

Although the original sold very well, quite a few people were disappointed with the quality, it wasn't that the game was bad, but many people felt it could have been better.

However, US Gold have put a lot more time into TURBO OUTRUN and turned out a highly polished product. The whole game has been improved throughout. The graphics on all versions have been improved immensely, with the 16 bit versions being as near as dammit identical to the arcade version. The 64 graphics have also been vastly improved with a large variety of beautifully drawn roadside objects. The sound is good on all versions with the C64 version being the best of the lot with a brilliant remix of the original Outrun theme cram packed with samples, brilliant stuff.

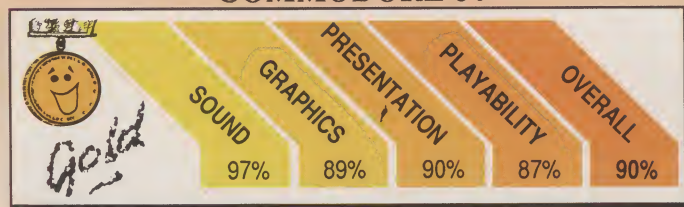


The controls are the usual left and right for steering with forward/ backward for acceleration and braking. The fire button either activates the turbo if you have selected automatic transmission, or changes gear if you've selected manual, in which case the space bar activates the turbo.

The game has a total of 16 levels, which are split into four checkpoints each, plus there is a 'continue play' option, which allows you to continue from where you left off. After 4 stages have been completed you are given the option to 'soup-up' your car with a hi-power engine, hi-grip tyres or a special turbo, each of which is carefully fitted by the garage technicians!

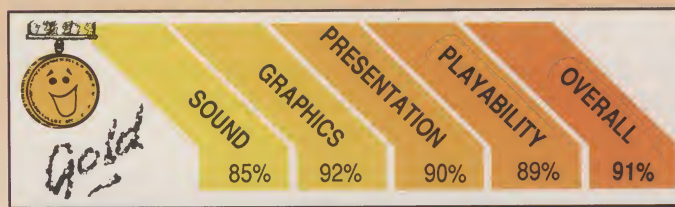
The driving sections vary from forests, which includes logs across the road, busy cities, even roads thick with snow!

COMMODORE 64



The actual effect of driving is very good, being both fast and smooth. A highly enjoyable race game that wouldn't go amiss in anyone's Xmas stocking!

ATARI ST/AMIGA



STUNT CAR RACER

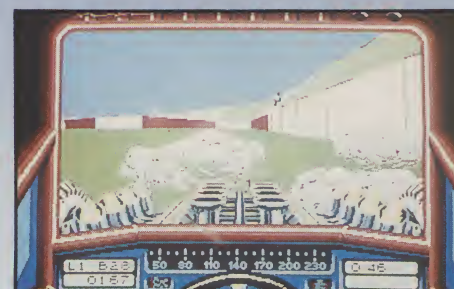
Step into the driving seat of one of the most wicked stunt cars around as a Stunt Car Racer. It's now up to you to prove just how good you are and to see whether or not you can ultimately become Division One Champion.

With a super-quick, turbo-charged V8 engine that will power you to incredible speeds, and long-travel suspension that enables you to soak up the bumps, your car really is an awesome projectile. The tracks are totally out of this world. Banked corners that enable you to 'pull g', undulating bumps that throw your car uncontrollably from side to side and huge ramps that catapult you into mid-air. In fact, you seem to spend so much time airborne, you could almost qualify for a pilot's licence!

Battle it out on the track against other computer controlled rivals, such as, Dare Devil and Road Hog. Race and jump so fast that your car starts to break up under the strain and then accelerate even more. There's no prizes for being second best in this game – it's all or nothing.

Stunt Car Racer – do you think you could be up there with the best?

Stunt Car is utterly brilliant and offers adrenalin-pumping, gut wrenching high speed action that'll keep you engrossed for months. C + VG.



SCREEN SHOTS MAY VARY

Stunt Car Racer is available for ST, Amiga, PC, Spectrum and Commodore 64

Micro-Style

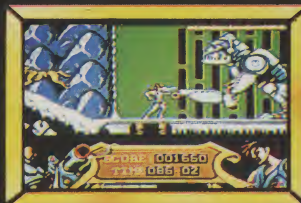


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Stein

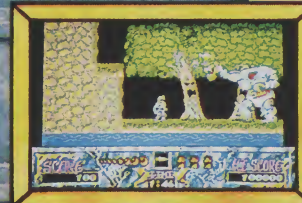
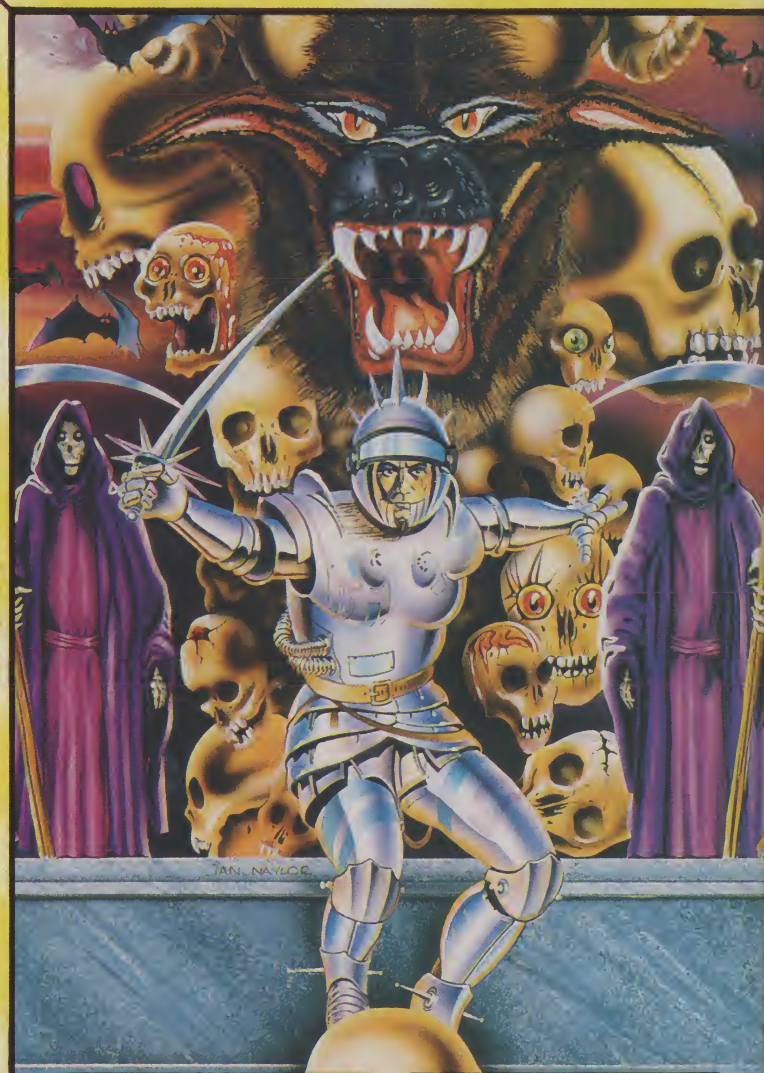
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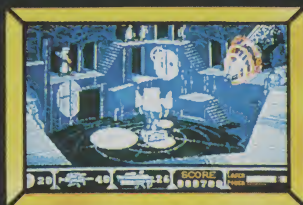
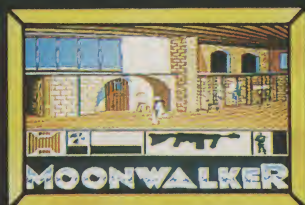
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Screen shots from various systems.

N G GAMES DESTINED
D HALL OF FAME!!



Arthur, the brave knight has returned! After rescuing his beloved in the Elite classic 'Ghosts and Goblins', Arthur has now to face a new challenge, this time courtesy of US Gold, in the follow up, GHOULS AND GHOSTS.

Once again, your sweetheart has been captured and this time is being held by Beelzebub himself! (That's the Devil in case you didn't know!). Being an all round hero and gallant sort of chap, you decide to take the devil on, rescue your chick, and so save the village from a fate worse than death.



US GOLD - SPECTRUM/ST REVIEWED - £9.99/£19.99
ALSO AVAILABLE ON C64/AMSTRAD/AMIGA

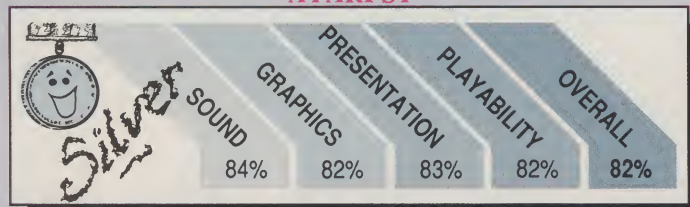
GHOULS

Your quest begins in the graveyard. Grim reapers emerge from the ground, vultures lurk in trees, mysterious plants spit skulls, trident wielding pig demons charge at you and guillotines clank away as if possessed! A bridge leads the way across the river where you must battle against the elements as well as the nasties! The end of level one is guarded by a fireball spitting armoured demon, and quite a few well placed shots are required to destroy this big guy, I can tell you! Defeating the demon opens the portal to level two, the Ghost Town!

Level two is (again) crammed full of nasties, this time in the shape of skulls, gargoyles and mutant flies. The entrance to level three is guarded by the evil Cerberus, definitely a pooch you wouldn't want to stroke!



ATARI ST



Level three sees you travelling upwards on an enchanted platform, blasting knights and statues attacking from all directions, while in level four you must take on the might of the flower world (honest!) as droves of deadly flora, plus our old friend, Grim Reaper also makes a reappearance.

The final level is, well you can probably guess, but if you can't I'm not going to tell you! You'll have to find out for yourself!

Along your route, various chests appear from the ground and blasting them with your current weapon smashes the chest to reveal a different weapon, bonus, or sometimes an evil conjuror who will turn you into a duck for a short while! Weapons vary from swords, daggers, firebombs and axes, each of which have their own qualities. There are also a few 'super weapons', including one that attracts lightning bolts to your armour and redirects them at the enemy!

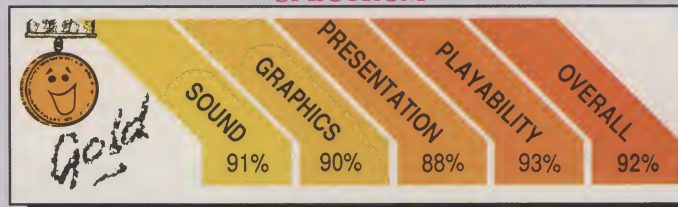
'N' GHOSTS



COMMENTS

Software Creations (the programmers) have certainly had their work cut out in recreating a superb coin-op. Thankfully, they have made a good job of it, the Spectrum version being one of the finest Speccy platform games for a long, long time. The Spectrum version sports gorgeous graphics, smooth scrolling and is so playable and addictive. The sound is also out-of-this-world, a brilliant tune opens the game on the 128 version and there are some amazing in-game effects too, the clanking guillotines being particularly good! The ST version is also playable, if a little difficult and again has some atmospheric tunes and effects. Although the ST version is good, I found the Spectrum version far more playable. If you are a fan of the arcade game, you will not be disappointed by this excellent conversion.

SPECTRUM



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Hiro, last of the Bladeknights, must reassemble the 16 fragments of the shattered Fireblade. Only then can he take on Havoc and avenge his people's death.
Available on: ATARI ST & AMIGA.

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SWITCHBLADE

GREMLIN - ST/AMIGA REVIEWED £19.99

WHO'D BE A SUPERHIRO?

For 10,000 years he slept. Now he's back. Havok by name and by nature. The peaceful tranquillity of the cyber world Thraxx has been once again thrown into turmoil.

The Fireblade, the power source of the ancient Bladeknights was destroyed, leaving them helpless to defend themselves. Only one survived, Hiro, the last of the Bladeknights.

Using skill, cunning and your reprogrammable cyber-arm, you must enter the Undercity in a quest to locate and reassemble the 16 fragments of the Fireblade. Then, and only then will you be able to avenge your people and confront the mighty Havok!



You begin your quest near the entrance to the underground labyrinth, armed with only your fist and feet, your first objectives are to get into the Undercity and find yourself a weapon. The actual power of your attacking move is done in rather a clever way. By holding down the fire button, a power bar on you left starts to rise and, depending on where you release the fire button, a punch (weakest), high kick or leg sweep (strongest) is performed. Although a weapon is useful when found, the above moves are more than a match for your adversaries. The power bar works in a similar fashion for the weapons, but depending on the weapon, determines the distance it will travel, or the power it strikes with.

The game itself is self mapping, which it does in rather a clever way. When you visit a location it will light up, and stay lit for the rest of that game. However, if there is a secret entrance on that screen, you will not actually see that portion of the screen until you enter it. Difficult to explain but a brilliant touch.

Various bonuses can be found on your travels, including gems, flasks, orbs, combat power speed-ups and resets plus a wide variety of weapons. The end of each level is guarded by (wait for it!) an end of level guardian who must be defeated before access to the next level is allowed.

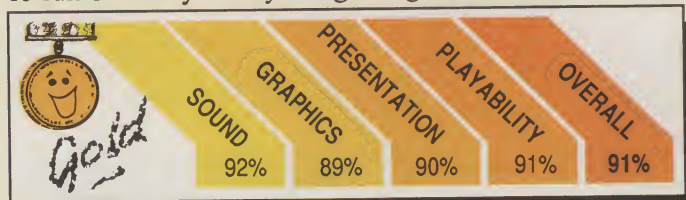


COMMENTS

The first thing you will notice upon seeing SWITCHBLADE is that it looks similar in style to the brilliant Rick Dangerous, which isn't surprising really as they've both been programmed by Core Design. The graphics are small, but beautifully detailed and animated with a good use of colour. The game opens with one of the most stunning Amiga tunes I've heard on a commercial title for a long time (the St's pretty good too!), there's also a choice of sound FX or a brilliant in-game tune to boot! The gameplay has been set just right, not too easy, not too hard, plus a tremendous feeling of satisfaction when you discover a particularly elusive secret passage!



Fans of Rick Dangerous will lap up this brilliant arcade adventure. Get your wellies, scarf and a thick coat on and get yourself down to Mr. Software Retailer immediately, before he sells out. Excellent stuff! The only problem is this, how are you going to convince the rest of the family that THEY want to play SWITCHBLADE instead of watching the umpteenth re-run of Chitty-Chitty Bang-Bang this Christmas?



BLADE WARRIORTM



The beast was present in the land and from tower to tower the sorcerers voice called upon him. As night encroached and set the sun to flight, so his legions made ready to conceal the tablets that would see daylight banished forever.



So, as the same last bloody light drained from east to west, the paladin came forth, ready to do battle against the legions of the night, using all his might and skill in this tale of swords and sorcery.



Screenshots from Amiga version



Atari ST, Amiga, IBM
PC and compatibles.

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DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE!

The Bitmap Brothers: Men or Gods? Martyn Brown hit the streets to find out (for 'streets' read 'fax machine')

HOW DID YOU GET TOGETHER?

"We kept bumping into each whilst doing various projects for Leisure Genius, Psion and Eidersoft, and found that we had similar interests (i.e. arcade games, improving the quality of software and drinking!)."

WHO DOES WHAT?

"For Xenon, Steve did the ST programming, Mike did the Amiga and Playchoice 10 (the arcade machine) programming and Eric did the graphics, but we all tend to muck in together. Nowadays, Mike and Steve jointly develop the initial game and Eric tends to concentrate on the 'production' side, with Xenon II for example, he directed Mark Coleman and the programmer as well as designing the levels."



WERE YOU SURPRISED AT JUST HOW SUCCESSFUL XENON WAS?

"Very surprised, but we did realise on completion that it was better than any other ST/Amiga shoot-em-up on the market. One of the good things that came from Xenon's success was that it was held up as an example for people to beat, and therefore improving the quality of 16 bit software."

ALL THE TITLES YOU HAVE PRODUCED SO FAR HAVE FEATURED AMAZING DAVID WHITTAKER SOUNDTRACKS, BUT HOW DID THE PARTNERSHIP COME ABOUT?

"It is obviously advantageous to have a good soundtrack on a game. With Xenon, we struck it lucky by choosing David to do the music, he did a wonderful job and rightfully deserved the award he won last year. With Speedball, we again used an original composition of David's, whereas Xenon II used a track composed by Bomb the Bass. For the last two games, we have 'toned' the soundtrack down a little during gameplay; it's fine to here a tune a few times, but a few hundred times???"

HOW DID THE IDEAS FOR SPEEDBALL COME ABOUT?

"We decided that we needed a break from shoot-em-ups and that it would be foolish to release a follow up to Xenon so soon, so we decided on a very different type of game."

"At the time, we were very much into an arcade game called World Cup Football which inspired us towards the Speedball idea. But a straight football game was not 'us', so what better than a bit of violence!!"

SPEEDBALL AGAIN FEATURED LOTS OF BAS-RELIEF GRAPHICS AND RACY SOUNDTRACKS, WERE YOU TRYING TO CREATE A LOOK AND FEEL THAT PEOPLE COULD IDENTIFY WITH?

"The graphics for Speedball were done by Mark so the Xenon similarities weren't planned, it basically came about that Speedball was set in a steel arena, and tiles were the best way to represent it."

"What we do aim for is a feeling of 'production' in a game that is associable with THE BITMAP BROTHERS, in a similar way to the production of music or films."



YOU ARE A PRIME EXAMPLE OF THE OVERNIGHT SUCCESS STORY (PERHAPS NOT QUITE!), DO YOU FEEL SUCCESS HAS CHANGED YOU?

"Not really, we're still the same lovable boys we were two years ago! The company motto is 'Don't believe the hype', read into that what you will!"

DID YOU LOOK AT THE COMPETITION WHILST DEVELOPING XENON II, OR DID YOU JUST SET OUT TO BREAK THE MOULD SO TO SPEAK?

"There was no competition to compare Xenon II with!! As Xenon had been so well received, we had to do something considerably better. That was the only benchmark during development, we are always trying to better the software market."

WHAT MACHINES DO YOU WORK ON WHILST DEVELOPING YOUR SOFTWARE?

"A PC is used to develop all the code, which is then downloaded using specially written software. Mark uses Degas Elite to draw the graphics, but a special creator was written to design the backdrops and alien waves."

HOW DID THE BOMB THE BASS SOUNDTRACK COME ABOUT?

"Contrary to what you may have read elsewhere, the Bomb the Bass music was our idea. We liked the track 'Megablast' a lot, and it was, at first, light-heartedly suggested that we used the track for the game. After further research, we found that Tim Simonen was into computer games, and it all snowballed from there."

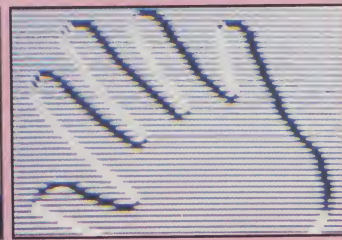
XENON II HAS CERTAINLY PUSHED THE BOUNDARIES OF LIMITATION BACK ON BOTH THE ST AND AMIGA, DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE SQUEEZED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE OUT OF THESE MACHINES, TECHNICALLY THAT IS?

"Xenon II is getting towards the most you can get out of the ST for speed, but more certainly can be done with the Amiga, who knows, I'm sure something will come out before too long that shocks the world with it's technical excellence."

HOW DO YOU SEE YOURSELVES AND THE MARKET CHANGING OVER THE COMING YEAR OR SO?

"The market must improve soon, there is still too much rubbish put out. It is understandable to a degree that if a company invests tens of thousands of pounds developing a game and it turns out to be garbage, then they must try and gain a return on some of the money invested in it, but really, quality control should start from day one. As far as computers go, I think the ST and Amiga will be here for a long time to come. People who have spent a lot of money on their machines are not going to rush out and buy an Archimedes just because it runs faster or has better graphics. This has been proven time and time again with machines like the Lynx and QL."

So there you have it, just an ordinary bunch of guys trying to earn a living by producing quality software and giving the punter (that's you!) something that's worth those hard earned pennies! Drat!, I didn't



**SPELLS? POTIONS? IN A BITMAP GAME, GET SERIOUS!!
FROM THE AUTHORS OF THREE OF THE FINEST 16 BIT GAMES
EVER, COMES SOMETHING A LITTLE DIFFERENT (CUE
MANIACAL LAUGHTER, JUST TO SET THE ATMOSPHERE!)**

CADAVER

Whilst conducting the above interview, Mike Montgomery also revealed to Martyn that a product had been under development whilst Xenon II was being written, although he would not say what it was.

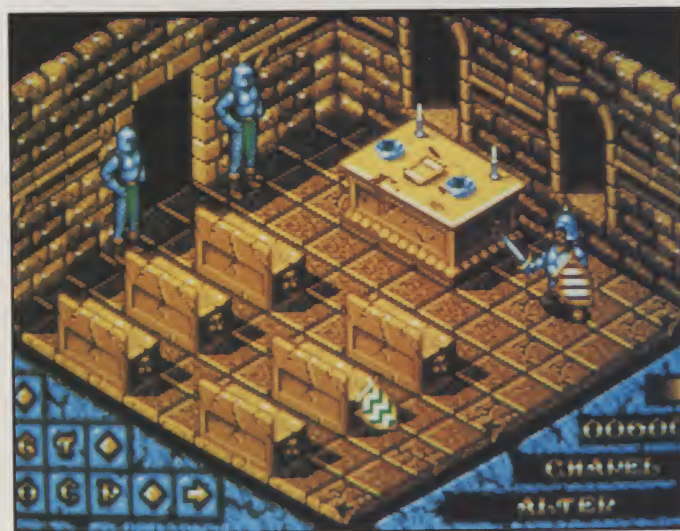
However, after rambling around the Mirrorsoft suite, I acquired some info on the said game plus this lurvely piccy for you to drool over as well, am I good to you or wot!!!

The game is called CADAVER, and it is set to shake up the world of fantasy role-playing and arcade adventures. Boasting a detailed plot, many puzzles to be solved and a large playing area, but without the fiddly bits, CADAVER looks like being one of the hot 16 products this Christmas.

You are cast as a medieval sleuth, who's task is to track down and kill a mass murderer. You will have complete arcade type control over role-playing features, allowing the player to interact freely with the

surrounding objects.

With regard to quality, I can sum it up in five words, it's by the Bitmap Brothers. Simple eh!



POWER DRIFT





AMIGA SCREEN SHOTS SHOWN

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Roar over mounds of mud, drive through the desert, slip 'n' slide on snow-covered tarmac and race your way through the night to face the final lap!

CAREFUL! Power Drift is no easy ride!

If you're heading for a collision hold onto your seat and enjoy those 360 degree spins before you bump back down to earth!

Burn some rubber, put your foot to the floor and scream back to the winning post!!

ACTIVISION SEGA

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OPERATION THUNDERBOLT

OCEAN SOFTWARE - AMSTRAD/AMIGA REVIEWED - £9.99/£24.99 - ALSO ON SPEC/C64/ST

Roy Adams is back! (Who!), You know, Roy Adams. He's the guy that was most played around this time last year in Ocean's mega coin-op conversion of Operation Wolf. Now he's exploding back onto your screen this Christmas in the follow up, OPERATION THUNDERBOLT, and this time he's brought his pal along with him, namely Hardy Jones!

A Boston bound DC10 has been hi-jacked by Arab Guerillas (he says in an Angela Ripon type voice!) who have taken control of flight 102 and redirected it towards Africa. The plane is now in hostile territory and the terrorists give their demands.

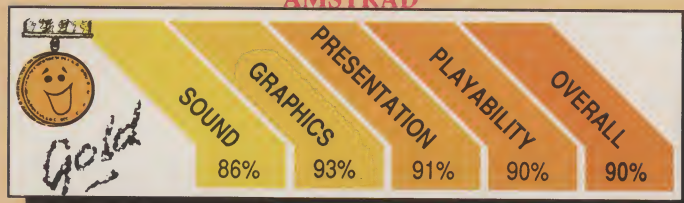
This time Roy's not alone, and along with his chum they make a formidable fighting force.

You are both equipped with a machine gun and a rocket launcher which have a limited amount of ammo. Ammunition can be replaced by shooting magazines and powder bottles on screen, plus the occasional crate that gets airlifted in.



In level one, you must defeat all the oncoming soldiers and reach the enemy spy at the end of the level who will provide you with information vital to your mission. After successfully catching the spy you then head for the ammunition depot where upon destruction of all the enemy soldiers, bullets and rockets can be replenished. After hi-jacking a jeep from the ammo dump, you head for the enemy hideout where some of the hostages are being held. Upon reaching the hideout, you must then attempt to free the hostages. By shooting the locks on the doors the hostages can be freed, but be careful not to shoot the hostages themselves in the midst of all the action! Your final opponent at the end of level four is a heavily armed officer, who must be defeated if you are to progress onto the next level.

AMSTRAD



Jumping into a nearby boat, you decide to take the quickest route to the enemy HQ where more hostages are being held.

Once inside the enemy HQ, you must again free the hostages imprisoned there and defeat the heavily armed officers that block your escape.

Finally, on arrival at the airport make your way down the runway, destroying everything in your path to reach the get-away aircraft. Only then will you be able to face the hi-jackers in the airliner. You must walk down the aisle of the airliner destroying the crazed hi-jackers as they attack. Upon reaching the cockpit you must then shoot the last hi-jacker who is using the pilot as a shield, which requires pinpoint accuracy.

Are you up to the challenge!!



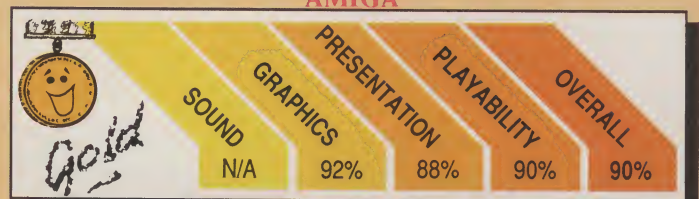
COMMENTS

Operation Wolf was last years Xmas Number 1, which is a tough act to follow for anyone! However, Ocean have come up with the goods once again, with an excellent conversion of an excellent arcade game.

One of the most impressive versions for me last year was the Amstrad version, and thankfully, Ocean haven't let Amstrad owning Op. Wolf fans down, as the Amstrad version is yet again a brilliant conversion, sporting superb graphics and fast action gameplay. The Amiga version last year came from Ocean France, but this year has been handled in house and is as near arcade perfect as you're going to get it! The graphics are straight out of the arcade machine and it plays very fast. I'll be totally honest as I haven't heard the sound on the Amiga version, but if it's up to Ocean's usual standard it should be very good.

If you are a fan of THUNDERBOLT in the arcades, or you liked Op Wolf, or you love a good blast, then this is the one for you, a brilliant conversion!

AMIGA



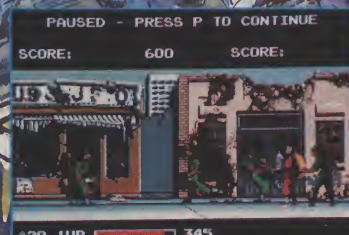
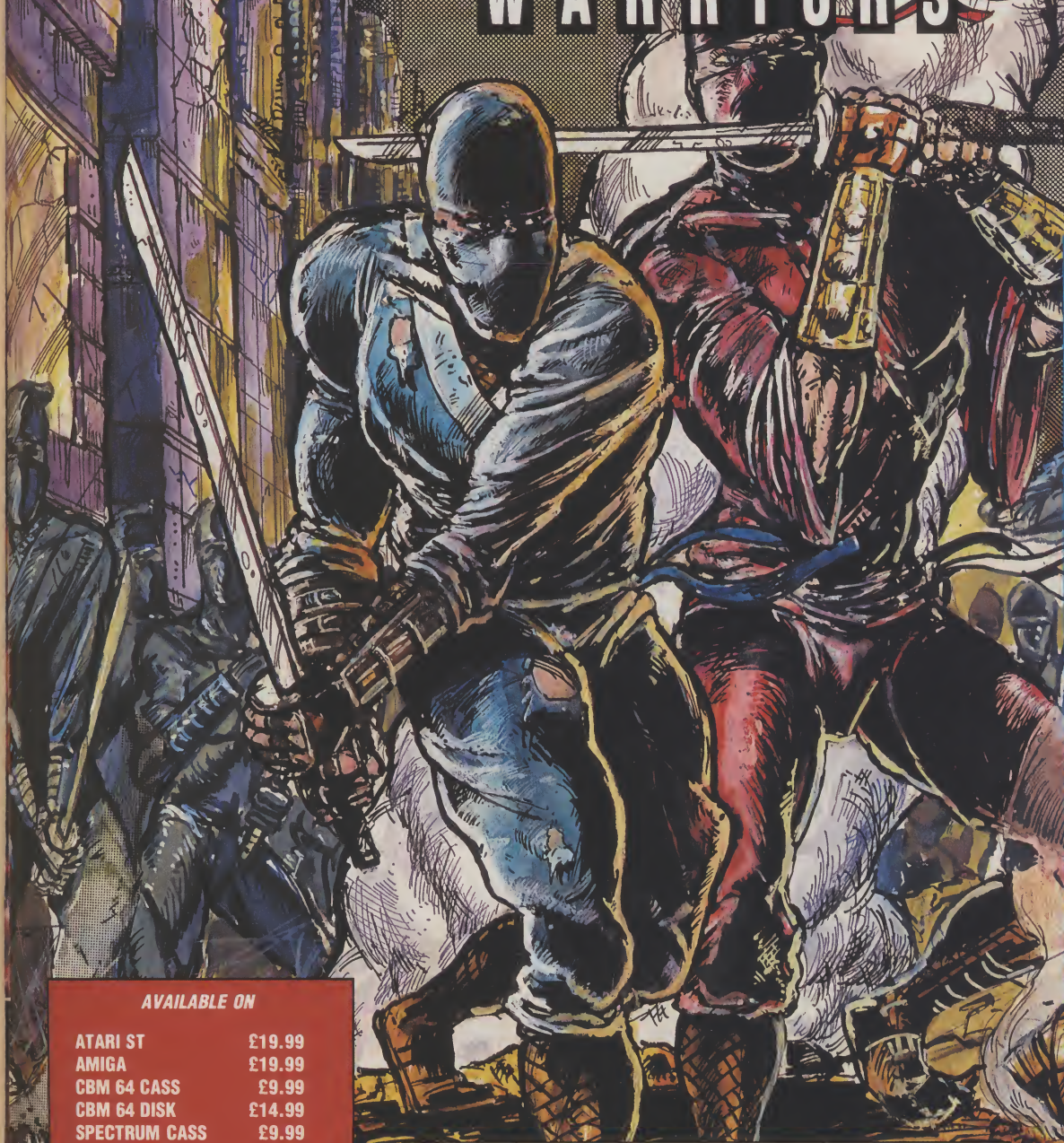
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AMIGA
ATARI ST
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THE UNTOUCHABLES

OCEAN SOFTWARE - SPECTRUM/AMSTRAD/C64 REVIEWED - £9.99 CASS - £14.99 DISK AVAILABLE NOW!
ST AND AMIGA ALSO AVAILABLE!

ANOTHER FINE 'NESS'

Join Elliot Ness and his three friends in their fight against Capone's corrupt empire. Can you battle your way through the various levels and eventually put Capone behind bars.

SECTION 1 - THE WAREHOUSE

Ness discovers a secret liquor factory hidden under the cover of a derelict warehouse. However when Ness and his men storm in they discover an extra bonus, some of Capone's bookkeepers are present, and each one has vital evidence which will help put you on Capone's trail.



SECTION 2 - THE BRIDGE

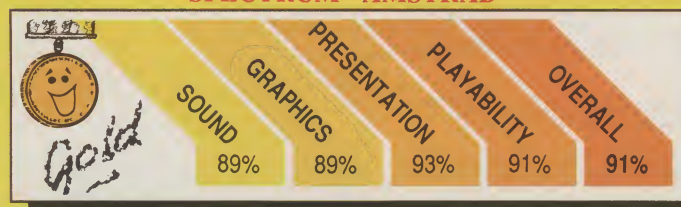
Using the information gleaned from the warehouse raid, the Untouchables head for the U.S./Canadian border where an illegal liquor run is taking place. Using your Tommy Gun, you and your men must find and collect the liquor by shooting the barrels, whilst avoiding Capone's henchmen.

SECTION 3 - THE ALLEYS

Whilst at the border you received a tip-off, telling you that Capone's accountant is attempting to leave the country, along with some vital criminal evidence. As you head through the alleyways towards the train station, Capone's men lie in wait, all of which must be eliminated before you can reach the station.



SPECTRUM - AMSTRAD



SECTION 4 - THE TRAIN STATION

As Ness awaits the arrival of the accountant, he helps a young lady with a pram up the steps of the station. However before Ness reaches the top of the steps, the accountant arrives and starts shooting, in the confusion Ness lets go of the pram and returns the fire. You must guide the pram safely to the bottom of the concourse whilst defending yourself from Capone's men and avoiding the innocent bystanders.

SECTION 5 - THE HOSTAGE

Upon realizing that he is the only one left, one of Capone's henchmen grabs the accountant, ordering Ness to drop the gun in ten seconds or he will shoot the accountant. Steady your aim as you will only get one chance! Take too long or miss and the accountants a gonner!

SECTION 6 - THE ROOFTOP

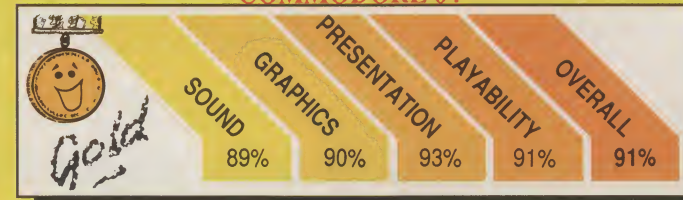
After all the evidence is collected, Capone is finally convicted. his head Hitman is still at large however, and in a thrilling rooftop chase, you must make sure he doesn't work again (one way or another!).



COMMENTS

Ocean have yet again come up with a terrific interpretation of the film, and although THE UNTOUCHABLES tag isn't as big as say, Robocop, THE UNTOUCHABLES is a brilliant game. The graphics are superb on all versions, especially the Spectrum which, although monochrome, add a certain feel to the whole game, the C64 graphics are also of high quality. Sound has been used well with some good effects, plus a wide variety of excellent tunes all befitting to the era. The playability has been set to a perfect level, with each section playing very well as a stand alone game! Put the whole thing together and you're left with an excellent game that should keep you playing for months....even years!!

COMMODORE 64



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SCREEN SHOTS FROM AMIGA VERSION

AVAILABLE SOON ON AMIGA

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Dynamic Debugger was designed and produced by Interactive Pixels. Commodore Amiga version programmed by Andy Reece and Jan Knox. Graphics and cover illustration by Pete Lyon. Music arranged by Anthony Ellis. Not for distribution to the Republic of South Africa.



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THE UNTOUCHABLES



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ocean

